

Meeting date: 5th April 2018

Report to: Cabinet



Subject/report title: Velo Birmingham – 100 mile Cycle Ride

Report from: Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

Report author/lead contact officer: Alan Brown / Paul Tovey

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: Select an Exemption paragraph from the Quick Parts drop-down list

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval to allow the Velo Birmingham Cycle Ride, planned for Sunday 12th May 2019, to take place on part of the highway network in Solihull, as shown on plan in Appendix A and Appendix B.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- (a) Support this major community cycle event taking place in Solihull.
- (b) Approve officers to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities, West Midlands Police and the event organisers to bring this key event safely to the Borough.
- (c) Note the community, economic, health and well-being benefits associated with the event, and
- (d) Approve the development of an effective communication plan to provide our residents and road users every opportunity to either participate in the event or to make alternative plans to avoid being caught up in the associated temporary road closures.

3. What is the issue?

- 3.1 Does Solihull Council want to be part of Velo Birmingham, thereby allowing 15,000 competitors to take part in a 100 mile cycle ride and in doing so it will require approximately 25 miles of roads in Solihull to be closed to traffic on Sunday 12th May 2019?
- 3.2 The event is also planned to use closed roads in Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire to complete the 100 mile course.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 The options under consideration include refusing the application; approving the route as requested by the organisers CSM Sport & Entertainment, or modifying the proposed route to minimise the impact on local residents.
- 4.2 The success of the inaugural Velo Birmingham cycling event has been widely reported in the local and national press. It proved to be extremely popular with the 15,000 competitors who took part on Sunday 24th September 2017.
- 4.3 The success of the 2017 event has been recognised following its nomination for the 'Participation Event of the Year' category at this year's prestigious BT Sports Industry Awards (www.sportindustry.biz/shortlist). The popularity of the event is further supported with over 25,000 people pre-registering to take part in the next event.
- 4.4 **So, why change the course?** The organisers had looked to repeat the event again this year. Unfortunately, due to on-going major road works along the original route the event has had to be postponed. This delay has provided an opportunity for the organisers to consider an alternative route for the event, this time on the eastern side of the West Midlands region.
- 4.5 Any event of this scale, which has the potential to be considered alongside the likes of the London Marathon and Ride London, will however be inconvenient for some people. The organisers acknowledge this in their pre-planning discussions and have already demonstrated a willingness to use the lessons learnt from the first event to help reduce the impact on the local communities it travels through.
- 4.6 On the positive side, there are some very real community and economic opportunities, together with the significant health and wellbeing benefits associated with promoting this level of physical activity. It may also inspire many others to take up cycling, which in the longer term could also contribute towards the Council's sustainable transport behaviour change targets. Appendix C, considers the potential benefits of bringing Velo Birmingham to Solihull.
- 4.7 This event will also provide an ideal opportunity to learn some important lessons on how to communicate, plan and implement high profile large scale sporting events following the news that the Common Wealth Games will be held in Birmingham in 2022. This is another real positive for both Solihull and the wider West Midlands region.

- 4.8 **So what is the planned route?** The organisers are proposing to take 15,000 competitors on an exciting clockwise journey through some of the finest parts of the West Midlands region, as shown on Appendix A and Appendix B. From Birmingham City Centre, the route travels east and moves briefly through north Solihull, before travelling through parts of north Warwickshire. It then proceeds into Coventry and hits the out skirts of their City Centre, before returning through the rural east of Solihull. It then returns back into Warwickshire passing both Baddesley Clinton and Packwood House. The route then re-enters into the south of Solihull, travelling through the villages of Knowle, Dorridge and Hockley Heath. It then travels through parts of Shirley and leaves the borough for the final time from Solihull Lodge. The route then meanders through south Birmingham and returns to Birmingham City Centre to complete the 100 mile course.
- 4.9 This will be a whole day event for the Borough and to ensure competitors' safety it will be held entirely on roads that will be closed to all traffic. It is planned to start in Birmingham City Centre around 6am on Sunday 12th May 2018. The quickest riders are likely to complete the 100 mile course in around 4 to 4 ½ hours. The slowest competitors could take up to 10 hours to finish the event.
- 4.10 Some indicative timings for the three sections of road closures along the course are as follows:
- **North Solihull:** from 6.15am to 11.15am
 - **Eastern Solihull:** from 7.30am to 4.00pm
 - **Southern Solihull:** from 8.15am – 5.30pm
- 4.11 Whilst the route through Solihull is not without its potential problems, officers believe these can be managed through the use of a good communication plan and appropriate temporary traffic management plans. Building on the lessons learned from last year's event the planning process will also include issues such as the alternative signed routes for diverted traffic, marshalling provision and contingency provisions.
- 4.12 Special arrangements will also be included to ensure all emergency and essential public services are maintained and these are considered through the event's Safety Advisory Group process.
- 4.13 The proposed route is the preferred route at this stage, although the organisers are fully aware there are a wide variety of external factors that could influence the final choice of route. In particular, the route in Solihull does cross both the HS2 construction site and our Fillongley Road bridge scheme which may require local diversions depending on how these schemes are progressing.

5. **Reasons for recommending preferred option**

- 5.1 From previous experience gained helping to manage events like the Olympic Torch coming through Solihull and other cycling and road running events officers see no reason why the application to bring Velo Birmingham should not be supported.

- 5.2 The organisers have committed to taking part in the approved Safety Advisory Group process to help identify and mitigate and potential safety risks. Safety is of paramount importance and having such large numbers of cyclists along the route means it can only take place in a “Closed Road” environment.
- 5.3 This comes at a significant cost which the organisers have again agreed to fully fund and resource.
- 5.4 This event has the ability to be a major community event, and through excellent communication this can help people to plan and make alternative arrangements to avoid being delayed by the event. Again the organisers have agreed to work with the councils to develop and implement a robust communications plan which they will commence as soon as all four authorities have given their approval to the event taking place.
- 5.5 Finally, it is suggested that bringing this event through Solihull will have significant benefits, which are captured in the promotional video from last year’s event. Velo Birmingham, an all-inclusive community cycling event which the Council is recommend to approve.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of the Council’s priorities:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of Council Priorities:

- Improve Health and Wellbeing
- Managed Growth
- Build Stronger Communities

- 6.2 The event is closely aligned to all of the Council’s priorities and the organisers have provided a paper on the potential benefits bringing the event to Solihull could have for both Solihull and the wide West Midlands Region. Appendix C provides a summary of the economic, health and community benefits.

6.3 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

None anticipated as a result of the event taking place in Solihull.

6.4 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 6.4.1 The Authority has as part of its discretionary powers the ability to close roads to motor vehicles for such temporary events to be held safely on the public highway. Should the Council choose to exercise these powers then there is no consultation required.

6.4.2 There would be an effective communication plan developed to ensure everyone has a chance to be aware of the event so that they may either participate or make alternative arrangements to go about their normal Sunday business.

6.5 Financial implications:

6.5.1 There is no significant financial implication for Solihull Council. The event is planned to be self-funding from the competitors' entry fees and commercial sponsorship. The organisers have confirmed they will fund all legal costs and all reasonable temporary traffic management measures required to close the streets affected in Solihull.

6.5.2 If approved, the Council's officers time will be required to support the detailed planning, and design stages, attend the event's Safety Advisory Group process and to provide the necessary legal powers to close the roads. These costs are not considered to be significant and can be funded from existing service revenue budgets.

6.6 Legal implications:

6.6.1 The Council has the necessary legal powers to enable the event to take place on closed roads.

6.7 Risk implications:

6.7.1 The risks associated with this event will be mitigated through the Safety Advisory Group process.

6.8 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.8.1 There are no restrictions on entry for this event, although competitors will clearly need to be reasonably physically fit to take part in this physical challenge.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Overall Route Plan

7.2 Appendix B – Route through Solihull

7.3 Appendix C – Organiser's Benefits report

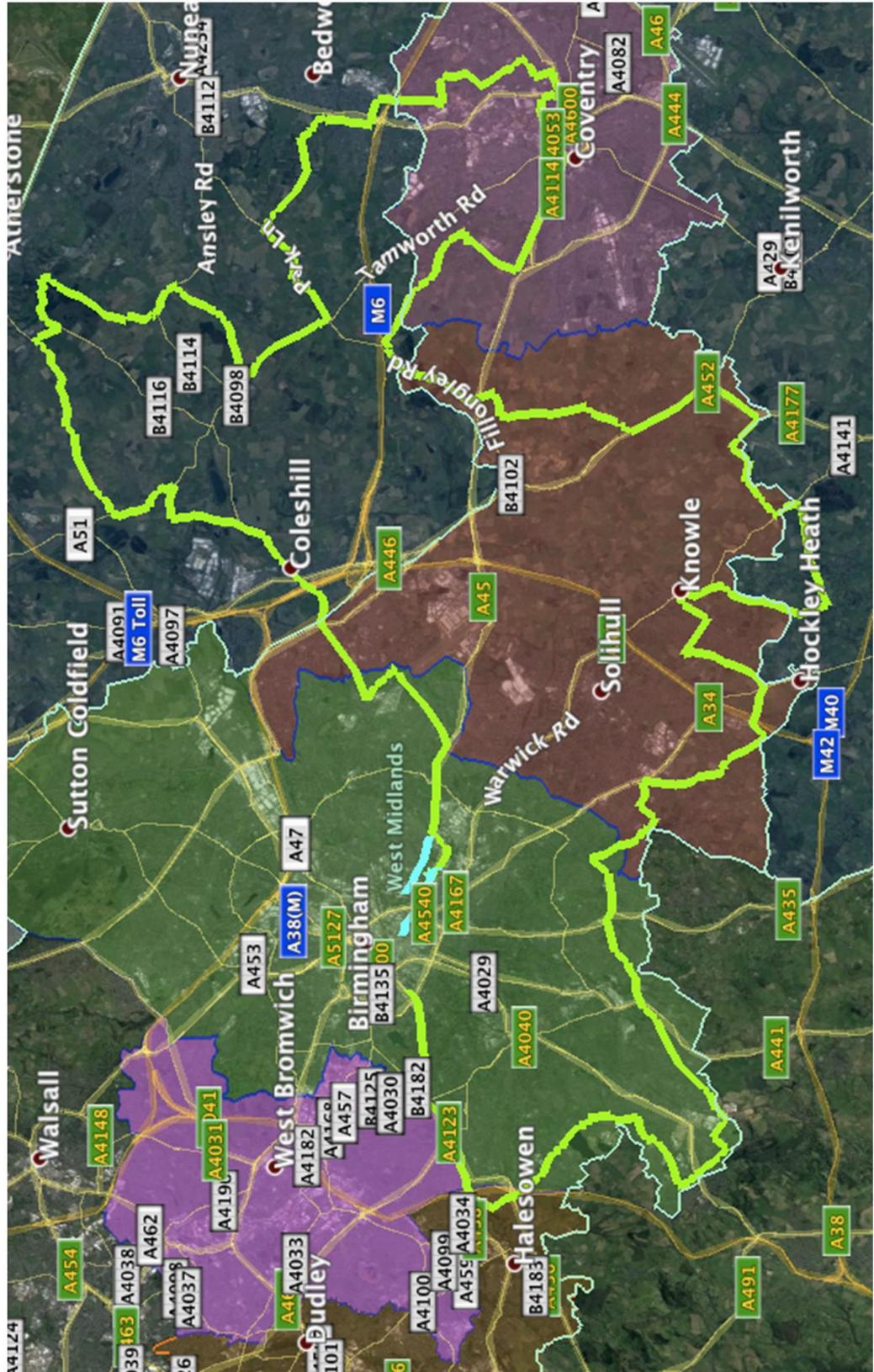
8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

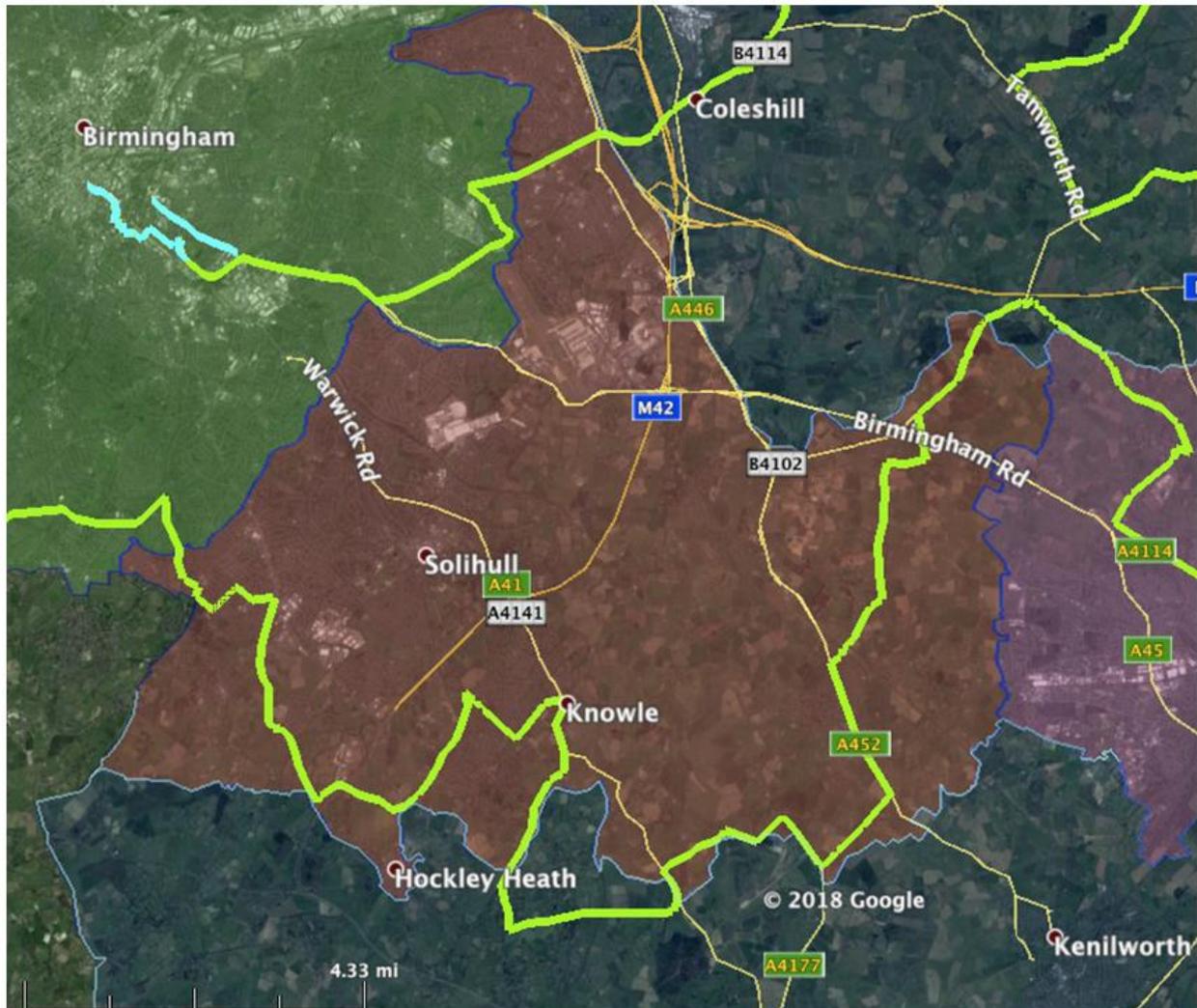
9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None

VELO Birmingham – Proposed Route 2019



OVERVIEW OF ROUTE IN SOLIHULL



Velo Birmingham – Benefits

The event organisers believe that the benefits of hosting the Velo event for Solihull fall into the following four areas:

1. Economic

43% of our riders in 2017 came from outside of the Midlands, meaning that thousands of people will potentially be introduced to Solihull for the very first time. Furthermore, these participants tend to be economically active people who are influential in their chosen fields. In addition, circa 60% of these riders booked hotel accommodation the night before the event, which encompassed an area up to 30 miles outside of central Birmingham.

In our post event rider survey, 22% of the participants stated that they rode sections of the route in advance of the event, 93% of non-local riders stated they were 'very likely' or 'likely' to visit places of interest along the route post the event and 87% said they would recommend to friends to do the same. This behaviour ensures year round economic impact from the event and not just over the event weekend itself.

In terms of the event weekend, with our riders on average bringing 1.8 spectators with them on event day, many businesses within villages and towns along the route report that they had their best Sunday's trading of the year. Overall, we estimate up to 50,000 spectators lined the route, many of whom contributed significantly to the local economy.

By working together, we believe that significant economic benefits for many Solihull businesses can be generated through:

- Creation of a spectator hub within Solihull, designed to attract the maximum number of visitors. To assist, CSM Active will subsidise event day activity such as barbecue breakfasts, kids' activities, etc. In addition, we will also work with a number of well-placed pubs along the route to encourage specific points of spectator engagement.
- Promote local business, restaurants, pubs and points of interest along the route via the Velo website.
- Encourage local businesses to take part in the Business 100 initiative - This is our corporate club that brings together participating Midlands business teams for regular pre event training rides and networking events, with former rugby legend Martin Johnson acting as our ambassador. The 2017 event saw 100 businesses participating, with circa £200k raised for charity through their collective efforts.

2. Health & Wellbeing

The health benefits of increasing cycling participation are well documented in terms of both the direct positive impact of cycling for individuals as a low impact form of exercise, plus the reduction in pollution and congestion that an increase in the percentage of journeys carried out on a bicycle achieves. As a result, encouraging higher levels of leisure cycling and the percentage of journeys that are apportioned to cycling is an important goal for every council

within the UK. There are of course several factors that will help achieve these aims but one of the major motivators to local residents to both initially take up a sport and also to become more regular in their participation habits, is the inspirational impact of major events. We therefore believe that an event such as Velo will have a positive impact on the regularity of cycling activity for Solihull residents.

The power of the Velo event to impact on residents' attitudes to cycling is reflected by the fact that in our 2017 post-event participant survey, 62% of our riders reported that they were inspired to cycle more often having participated, with 34% inspired to use their bike to replace short car journeys.

Key to maximising Velo's ability to increase participation levels is to link the event closely to Solihull's existing health and wellbeing campaigns, so that core messages align and are reinforced. The Velo event offers a further communication platform for your own campaign's existing relevant messages. With regular Velo newsletters, an interactive central event website and active social media activity directed to all of the participants, Velo has the tools available to significantly increase your ability to reach the widest possible audience.

3. Profile

The Velo event is a major national sporting event that in just its first year has achieved an entry of over 15,000 riders. This makes the event the UK's second largest cycling event behind Ride London and one of the largest events of its kind in the world. Supported by CSM's marketing and PR support, due to its size and significance, the event generates both regional and national media coverage. Throughout all of this coverage, the route Local Authorities will be named and celebrated.

The profile of the event's host regions is further hugely amplified by the event's social media activity – for example we shared 185,000 personalised action photos with our participants immediately post the event, which were viewed in total 6.7 million times on Facebook. Furthermore, whilst the 2017 Velo event is exclusively for amateur riders, in the medium term (i.e. next three years), our ambition is to add a professional element to the front end of the event. This evolution will facilitate accompanying national TV coverage and increased media interest, all of which will assist build the region's profile still further.

4. Community

The inaugural Velo event demonstrated how major events can powerfully bring communities together. In many of the towns and villages along the route, many thousands of families and residents lined the road to cheer the riders on.

The event also generates huge charitable income for good causes. The 2017 event raised over £2 million for its four official charities, making it one of the most successful charitable sporting events staged anywhere in the UK. We are committed to work with you so that a local Solihull charity can be nominated to benefit from the significant fundraising efforts that the event will generate.

Furthermore, in addition to the riders, Velo requires in the region of 500 locally recruited volunteers to ensure it is a success. These volunteering opportunities are seen by many as a very positive way to give back and also gain valuable work experience for the future.